Flooding

Ninety percent of all natural disasters in California are flood related. All rivers and creeks, no matter their size, have floodplains that flood on a regular basis. This flooding is natural and serves a beneficial function. Unfortunately, floodplains have also historically been a prime area for development. As a result, many homes and other structures are currently in danger of flooding. Floods in this area often occur with little or no warning and can be very dangerous and costly. However, by being aware of your flood risk, you can prepare and make choices ahead of time that may save lives and property when flooding does occur.

Because of its size and geographic diversity, flooding in our area may be from many different sources. Creeks may back up and overflow, drainage inlets and pipes may become blocked. Heavy rainfall may overwhelm our storm drains or creeks and flood adjacent low-lying areas. Levies may break as the result of high tides, heavy rainfall or rapid snowmelt. Floodwaters can cover many blocks to a depth of several feet. Even shallow floodwaters can damage cars, garages, basements and lower floors.

What You Can Do to Help Reduce Flood Damages:

Before a Flood:

Do not dump or throw anything into ditches, streams or drainage inlets. Even grass clippings and branches can accumulate and cause flooding. If your property is next to a ditch or stream, please do your part to keep the banks clear of brush and debris.

If you see dumping or debris in the ditches, streams, or drainage inlets, notify your Public Works Department.

Always check with the Building Department before you build, alter, regrade, or place fill on your property. A permit may be needed to ensure that projects do not cause flooding problems on other properties. If you see non-permitted building or grading, notify your Building Department.

If you don't have flood insurance, talk to your insurance agent. Homeowner's insurance policies do not cover damage from floods. However, if your community participates in the National Flood Insurance Program, you can purchase a separate flood insurance policy backed by the Federal Government. This flood insurance is available to any citizen residing in a participating community regardless of their individual flood risk.

If you suspect a flood is coming, you should shut off your gas and electricity and move your valuable contents to the highest location in your home. It is unlikely that you will get much warning, so a detailed checklist prepared in advance would help ensure that you don't forget anything.

During a Flood:

Drowning is the number one cause of flood deaths.

Currents can be deceptive; six inches of moving water can knock you off your feet. If you walk in standing water, use a pole or stick to feel the ground in front of you to ensure that it has not been eroded away.

More people drown in their cars than anywhere else. Don't drive around road barriers; the road or bridge may be washed out. Water only two feet deep can float your car and carry it away.

Stay away from power lines and electrical wires. The second leading flood killer is electrocution. Electrical current can travel through water. Report downed power lines to Pacific Gas and Electric or your police service provider.

Turn off your electricity. Some appliances, such as television sets, keep electrical charges even after they have been unplugged. Don't use appliances or motors that have gotten wet unless they have been taken apart, cleaned, and dried.

After a Flood:

Look out for animals. Small animals that have been flooded out of their homes may seek shelter in yours. Use a pole or stick to poke and turn things over and scare away small animals.

Look before you step. After a flood, the ground and floors are covered with debris including broken bottles and nails. Floors and stairs that have been covered with mud can be very slippery.

Be alert for gas leaks. Use a flashlight to inspect for damage. Don't smoke or use candles, lanterns, or open flames unless you know the gas has been turned off and the area has been ventilated.

If you would like more information, including whether or not your home is in a Special Flood Hazard Area and how to protect your home from flooding, please contact one of the Floodplain Management Agencies listed below:

Federal Emergency Management Agency, (FEMA) Region IX

(510) 627-7100

www.fema.gov

California Department of Water Resources

(916) 341-5250

www.fpm.water.ca.gov

Unincorporated Contra Costa County

(925) 646-1623

www.co.contra-costa.ca.us/depart/pw

City of Antioch	(925) 779-7035
City of Brentwood	(925) 516-5405
City of Clayton	(925) 672-9700
City of Concord	(925) 671-3092
Town of Danville	(925) 314-3310
City of El Cerrito	(510) 215-4330
City of Hercules	(510) 799-8247
City of Lafayette	(925) 299-3247
City of Martinez	(925) 372-3569
Town of Moraga	(925) 888-7092
City of Oakley	(925) 625-7003
City of Orinda	(925) 253-4253
City of Pittsburg	(925) 252-4963
City of Pleasant Hill	(925) 671-5261
City of Richmond	(510) 620-6868
City of San Pablo	(510) 215-3030
City of San Ramon	(925) 973-2670
City of Walnut Creek	(925) 943-5834